



Early Journal Content on JSTOR, Free to Anyone in the World

This article is one of nearly 500,000 scholarly works digitized and made freely available to everyone in the world by JSTOR.

Known as the Early Journal Content, this set of works include research articles, news, letters, and other writings published in more than 200 of the oldest leading academic journals. The works date from the mid-seventeenth to the early twentieth centuries.

We encourage people to read and share the Early Journal Content openly and to tell others that this resource exists. People may post this content online or redistribute in any way for non-commercial purposes.

Read more about Early Journal Content at <http://about.jstor.org/participate-jstor/individuals/early-journal-content>.

JSTOR is a digital library of academic journals, books, and primary source objects. JSTOR helps people discover, use, and build upon a wide range of content through a powerful research and teaching platform, and preserves this content for future generations. JSTOR is part of ITHAKA, a not-for-profit organization that also includes Ithaka S+R and Portico. For more information about JSTOR, please contact support@jstor.org.

DOCUMENTS

A CONTEMPORARY ACCOUNT OF THE SAN JACINTO CAMPAIGN

[A copy of the following letter was obtained for *THE QUARTERLY* by Miss Katie Daffan of San Augustine, Texas. The original is in the possession of Rev. C. E. W. Dobbs, Pastor of the Eaton Street Baptist Church, Key West, Florida. He carefully compared the copy with the original, and made a number of corrections. He says: "The original . . . is in good preservation. On account of too frequent handling I find that several creases have almost rendered illegible perhaps half a dozen words in the four pages fool's cap. The penmanship is remarkably good." The letter was written the second day after the battle of San Jacinto by W. C. Swearingen to his brother Lemuel Swearingen of Scottsville, Kentucky.]

Texas Bufaloe Bieau, Apr. 23rd, 1836.

Dear Brother:

In my last letter I informed you that I should start the next day for Gen. Huston's camp, and Joined him on the Colorado River, the Mexican Army was then Encamped on the oposite side of the River 3000 strong.¹ Huston's Army was including our 2 companies 1372 men, the next day after we Joined him he commenced a retreat back on the River Brassas, 15 miles above the town of San Felipe de Austin (which Gen. Huston had burnt²) the 2nd day after the Site of San Felipe was occupied by the Mexican Army Gen. Huston stationed 3 companies on the river oposite town to prevent their crossing. Santa Anna sent a detachment of 500 men to a ferry below San Felipe called Fort Bend and crossed them over and then sent the Remainder down to the same place and crossed his whole force. Santa Anna stationed 2500 men at Fort Bend and took 500 of his Veterans and 1 heavy Brass nine Pounder and pushed on to Harisburg on

¹The Mexican force at this place seems to have been less than 800. See *THE QUARTERLY*, IV, 244, note 5.

²That is, caused to be burnt. Houston always denied that he gave the order to burn San Felipe.

Bufaloe Bieau, 35 miles from Fort Bend on his way to Galveston Island, the only port the Texans now have in their possession. Huston immediately crossed the Brasas and took up his march for Harrisburg distant 57 miles we got to the bieau opposite Harrisburg in the evening and Santa Ana had left it that morning for Linches Ferry on the Road to Galveston Next morning our spies brought in the Mexican Mail Rider and the mail From which we learned that Santa Ana was with the army in person. Gen. Huston had ben compelled to give furlows to upwards of 200 men to go and cary their families beyond the Trinity River for Security, and one entire Company that was left oposite San Felipe went home instead of Joining us on our march, and when we reach Bufaloe Bieau we had 810 men, and before we got through examining the letters, our spies that crossed the Bieau brought in the Col. commanding the Mexican cavalry with a letter from Genl Coss to Santa Ana stating that he would start the next morning from Fort Bend with 650 men to Join him at Linches Fery on Bufaloe Bieau, Gen. Huston then knew that Santa Ana had gone by way of New Washington on the bay, to destroy that place, and then to march up the Bieau to Linches Fery and Join Coss and march on to Galveston and take it Before Huston could find where he was, leaving the main body at Fort Bend to amuse Huston, Gen. Huston crossed the Bieau next day with 520 men and the 2 4 pounders that reached us on our march from the Brasas and left the balance to take care of our baggage and guard the camp. we lay in the Bushes on the road to watch Coss and the 650 men which was expected to pass that day but did not. as soon [as] it became dark we commenced a rapid march for Linches Fery, calculating that Santa Anna would not cross the Bieau untill the arival of Gen. Coss at 2 oclock A. M. we halted within 2 1/2 miles of Linches Fery at Sun rise on the 20th ultimo [*sic*], we formed our line of battle and proceeded to the fery. when we reached the Fery we found Santa Ana had not yet reached there, but was on his way up from Washington. Huston picked his ground, placed his men, gave them his orders, then made them stack their arms in their places and told them to eat their breakfast and be ready to Receive them about 11 oclock A. M. They came in sight drawn up in line, 400 infantry and 100 horse with their 9 pounder in the center of their Infantry, at

about 350 yds distance they opened on what few they could see of us with their cannon charged with grape and canister shot, but the men they saw was protected by the timber and sustained no injury except 1 man slightly wounded, they did not no we had got a canon and their fire was not returned until their Infantry had comenced their fire with musquetry. we then comenced with our canon hoping they would charge with their Infantry to take them, and by that means we could cut them all off and if possible take Santa Anna prisoner, or kill him. They retreated from our 4th fire of the canon to a small wood in our front where their canon was planted and kept up a fire with their canon until 1 oclock P. M. when they fell back to a piece of high pararie on the edge of the marsh, their wright and from their wright to a little past, their center was covered by a thick wood and pon[d] and their left by an almost impassible bican, with a level open pararie in front, and immediately comenced fortifying with brush, bagage etc. Huston then determined to come out in the plain and engage them, the cavelry was sent out to draw the enemy from their cover but we could not get them to attack us, it being late in the afternoon, Huston deferred attacking him until morning and marched into camp. that knight Coss arrived with his 650 men and Joined Santa Ana making his force 1150. Santa Ana then considered Huston and Texas then in his power with no chance of escape and that he would let Cosses men rest one day and on the morning of the 22nd seal the death warrant of Texas by the destruction of Huston and the only men Texas has in the field. At half past 12 oclock of the 21st ultimo [*sic.*] we left our camp to attack him, leaving 1 company of 38 men in camp, Our cavalry about 110 strong was posted on the wright, the 2 companies of Regulars next to the Cavalry, the 2 companies of Volunteers during the on our left and the malitia on the left oposite the woods about 300 yds in their front was a lo hollow that protected us from their canon in that hollow we formed our line with our 2 4b canon (presented to Texas by the ladies of Cincinnati Ohio) in the rear of the regulars with orders as soon as they ascertained where their canon was planted to open their fire on it and to keep up on the advance with the infantry. the infantry was ordered to trail arms and advance until within 50 yds of the enemy before we fired, as soon as we gained the level they

comenced on our company with grape and canister shot. we rushed on it quick to within 50 yds a heavy fire of Grape canister and musketry, our riflemen having nearly one hundred yards less to go than we had comenced the action with small arms a little before we did with our musquets. the musquetry and riflemen kept advancing as they fired when within about 20 steps of the enemy's line we were ordered to charge with the bayonet as soon as we was ordered to the charge and brought our guns to the proper position the enemy gave way except about 60 men round the canon and protected by a breast work of corn sacks, salt barrels of meal and boxes of canister shot. they fell by the bayonet and sword in one mangled heap from that time until they reached the bieu. it was nothing but a slaughter, they at first attempted to swim the Bieu but they were surrounded by our men and they shot every one that attempted to swim the bieu as soon as he took the water, and them that remained they killed as fast as they could load and shoot them until they surrendered. the enemy lost time [*sic*] between 620 and 700 killed dead on the field and in the Bieu, 410 prisoners among whom is Gen. Santa Anna H. I. M. [S.] E. L. F. his private secretary and the next in command to Santa Anna Genl Savala [*sic*]. 10 of his field officers was killed dead at the head of them is Gen. Coss. There is more than half our prisoners wounded. Our loss was 4 men killed dead and 23 wounded, 3 have since died and there is one more that will die in two days at most. the balance will all get well. Gen. Huston when he ordered the charge, went in front of his men. he was shot through the ankle between the bone and the heel string and his horse killed.

To see the number, the position and the termination and the time in which it was done, (time 18 minutes) it at once shows that the hand of Providence was with us. I shall be in Kentucky early in the fall. Kiss William for me and tell him pappy will be there in the fall and stay with him always and that he must be a good boy. Santa Anna promises if they will spare his life and his men he will guarantee Texas free as far as they claim in the Declaration of Independence. Couriers start in the morning to order all the Mexican troops in Texas to fall back on San Antonio and Gonzalez until prelimanaries are settled and one after the president of Texas to come to our camp and treat with the

tyrant and his fate and that of Texas sealed. Huston says that every man that was in the battle shall have 2 leagues of land The boat is going to start and I must stop. I will write again in a few days. I remain your affectionate brother,

W. C. Swearingen.

AN EARLY LETTER OF SAM HOUSTON'S

[The letter which follows was presented to the University of Texas during the past summer by Professor D. C. Lyle of the McDonogh School for Boys, near Baltimore, Maryland. It was written to his great-uncle, Alexander Campbell, whose farm adjoined the Houston homestead near Lexington, Virginia. Houston was at the time slowly recovering from the desperate wounds which he had received the preceding August in the battle of To-ho-pe-ka. The peace to which he refers was, of course, the treaty of Ghent with Great Britain. Instead of being "disbanded," Houston was promoted to a lieutenancy in the regular army, and remained in the service until May, 1818, when he resigned. The letter was written when Houston was just past twenty-two, and is one of the earliest manuscripts that we have from his pen. In a sketch of Houston published in the *Library of Southern Literature* (VI, 2561), Professor Garrison remarked that if Houston was christened Samuel, he "never called himself by the name or signed it in that form." The letter indicates, however, that in his youth Houston sometimes indulged in the full scriptural *praenomen*.]

Dandridge Apl. 25th 1815

Dear Sir

When I left you I expected to have written to you before now, but not knowing whether or not I would long remain stationary I have omitted writing, and I suppose the restoration of peace will supersede the necessity of doubts on the subject, for it is very probable I will be disbanded, tho. I will not know before the first of May If I am continued in service it is very likely my destination will soon be New Orleans, and if discontinued I think it probable I will reside in Knoxville for it will be proper for me to pursue some course for a livelihood which will not be laborious as my wounds are not near well, and I suppose it will be impracticable for a disbanded officer to marry, for the[y] will be regarded as

cloathes, out of fashion, not worn or much altered before the[y] are worn but I will not despond, before I am disappointed and I suppose that will be some time for I will not court any of the Dear Girles before I make a fortune and if I come no better speed than I have done heretofore, it will be some time, but I hope before this reaches you, or soon after you will have it in your power to inform me of your marriage to Miss N. Steele for when I left Virginia I thot. it was not far off. I have not any news of importance to write you, people here are much gratified at the restoration of peace, and as we are all Republicans we do not think it is a dishonorable peace, the officers of the army would as soon war had continued, or the major part of them, as relates to me, I would not want peace if I did not believe it was promoting the happiness of the community at large, but at any time I am willing to sacrifice my wish to the welfare of the Republic. please present my warmest respects to your mother and all whom you Believe are my friends I am sincerely your friend

Saml. Houston

[Addressed on reverse]

Capt. Alexander Campbell
Lexington
Va

Mr Ro. McEwen